

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 DHA-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SCSE-00 SCA-01

SY-05 OPR-02 /073 W

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O 041345Z AUG 76

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4946

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

:AMCONSUL DURBAN IMMEDIATE 968

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 1288

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS SF

SUBJECT: SOWETO DEMONSTRATION AND THREE DEATHS

1. AT 0600 TODAY (AUGUST 4), 5000 STUDENTS GATHERED IN ORLANDO SOCCER STADIUM IN SOWETO TO ORGANIZE MARCH TO POLICE STATION IN JOHANNESBURG (15 MILES) TO PROTEST CONTINUING DETENTION OF FOUR STUDENTS ARRESTED IN JUNE 16 RIOTS. NUMBER WAS QUICKLY AUGMENTED TO MORE THAN 10,000, INCLUDING NON-STUDENTS, WHO ATTEMPTED BREAK THROUGH POLICE CORDON BLOCKADING EXIT FROM SOWETO. POLICE FIRED SHOTS IN AIR AND USED TEARGAS TO DISPERSE DEMONSTRATORS, BUT THEY REGROUPED TO CONTINUE MARCH. IN ENSUING CONFRONTATION, THREE DEMONSTRATORS WERE SHOT AND KILLED, ACCORDING TO JOHANNESBURG STAR. OTHERS WERE INJURED, BUT NUMBER OF CASUALTIES ADMITTED AT BARAGWANATH HOSPITAL NOT ACCURATELY KNOWN.

2. ALL RAILWAY AND BUS SERVICE FROM SOWETOW WAS CANCELLED AT ABOUT 0800, FOLLOWING DEMONSTRATORS' DAMAGE OF KEY SIGNAL BOX AND STONING OF TRAINS. SUBSEQUENTLY, TAXI SERVICE WAS HALTED AND ALL SHOPS CLOSED. MANY BLACKS ATTEMPTING TO

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GO TO WORK WERE PELTED WITH ROCKS, AND SOME WERE FORCED

FROM VEHICLES AND COMPELLED TO RETURN HOME. THOUSANDS OF BLACK WORKERS DID NOT REPORT FOR WORK IN JOHANNESBURG OFFICES AND FACTORIES. ONLY ONE OF CONGEN'S BLACK EMPLOYEES SUCCEEDED. JOHANNESBURG STAR REPORTED ABSENTEE RATE AT 60 PERCENT.

3. POLICE REPORTED THEY WOULD "ATTEMPT TO STOP MARCHERS LEAVING SOWETO AT ALL COSTS." ROAD BLOCKS HAVE BEEN SET UP AT ALL EGRESS ROADS, AND WHITES AND NEWSMEN HAVE BEEN DENIED ENTRY.

4. IN BLACK TOWNSHIP OF ALEXANDRA IN JOHANNESBURG'S NORTHERN OUTSKIRTS, BANDS OF DEMONSTRATORS SIMILARLY BLOCKED BLACKS FROM GOING TO WORK. THEY SET FIRE TO A SCHOOL, SABOTAGED RAIL LINE, AND THREW STONES AT POLICE, WHO RESPONDED WITH TEARGAS CANISTERS. NO SHOTS REPORTED.

5. SO FAR NO INCIDENTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN EAST RAND TOWNSHIPS, BUT TENSION HAS BEEN EVIDENT FOR DAYS.
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